CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 3, 6, 15-18 and 20-33 without prejudice and without disclaimer of subject matter.

Please amend Claims 1, 4, 7, 8, 10-14, 19 and 34 as follows:

1.   (Currently Amended) An information gathering system for allowing a user to verify the user's vote, the system comprising:

at least one computer;

at least one output device coupled to the computer;

a software component executable by the at least one computer, the software component being arranged to:

    assign a unique identifier corresponding to an official ballot, the unique identifier being assigned based on a user's act of voting;

    store a user's voting choices and corresponding unique identifier in a tabulation database;

    validate the user; and

    cause the computer to output on the output device:

        a voting stub, the voting stub including the unique identifier; and

        the official ballot on the output device, the official ballot and the voting stub including the unique identifier corresponding to the official ballot and the user's voting choices,

    wherein the unique identifier on the voting stub is visible to allow the user to access the tabulation database to verify the integrity of the user's voting choices as printed on the official ballot after the official ballot has been tabulated.

2.   (Original) The system according to claim 1, further comprising an input device coupled to the computer wherein the software component is further arranged to read a completed customized ballot from the input device, check the completed customized ballot for errors and to

2

cause the computer to provide output to the output device corresponding to the completed customized ballot.

3.   (CANCELLED)

4.   (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 3 1, further including a forms database accessible by the computer, the forms database including form formatting and content information.

5.   (Original) The system according to claim 4, wherein the forms database corresponds to an official ballot forms database.

6.   (CANCELLED)

7.   (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 6 1, wherein the tabulation database corresponds to an official vote tabulation database.

8.   (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 6 1, wherein the validated user accesses the tabulation database via a communication network.

9.   (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 1, wherein a bar code corresponding to the unique identifier is printed on at least one of the voting stub and the official ballot.

10.   (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 3 1, wherein the unique identifier is a randomly generated number.

11.   (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 2, wherein the customized ballot is prepared based on at least one of a validated user's address and an allowable language preference.

3

12.   (Currently Amended) A method of voting, comprising:

~~verifying that the user is eligible to participate by consulting a first database;~~

~~customizing a ballot by consulting a second database;~~

requiring ~~the eligible user~~ a voter to provide to the computer a response to ~~the~~ a ballot;

assigning a unique identifier to the voter's response to the ballot;

storing the voter's response to the ballot and corresponding unique identifier in a database;

producing a first tangible record of the response for retention by the voter, the first tangible record including a unique identifier corresponding to the response;

producing a second tangible record of the response, the second tangible record including the voter's response to the ballot;

collecting the second tangible record;

storing the second tangible record; and

using the unique identifier to allow ~~a user~~ the voter to confirm that the second tangible record represents ~~accurate user intent~~ the vote intended to be cast by the voter by allowing the user to access the database using the unique identifier.

13.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 12, further comprising ~~rejecting users not listed in the first database~~ confirming that the voter's vote was printed on the second tangible record as intended by the voter, wherein the confirmation occurs after the second tangible record is collected.

14.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 13, wherein requiring the ~~verified user~~ voter to provide to the computer a response to the ballot comprises:

inputting the response into the computer;

checking the response by comparing the response to a selected standard;

rejecting the response if the response does not meet the requirements of the selected standard; and

requiring the ~~verified user~~ voter to correct the rejected response.

4

15-18. (CANCELLED)

19.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 12, wherein ~~the second database is a forms database, the forms database being comprised of form formatting and content information~~ confirming that the second tangible record represents the vote intended to be cast by the voter further includes comparing the voter's response to the ballot stored in the database with the voter's response to the ballot printed on the second tangible record.

20-33. (CANCELLED)

34.   (Currently Amended) The system according to claim ~~3~~ 1, wherein the unique identifier is printed on the official ballot and voting stub to allow for confidential verification of the integrity of the ~~validated~~ user's response without giving the ~~validated~~ user a physical copy of ~~does not include~~ the ~~response~~ user's vote.

5